

Dissertation Title : A Critical Study of the Concept of the Bhava in Theravada Buddhism

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Abstract

This research is of 3 objectives:- 1) to study the concept of Bhava in the Pali Tripitaka scriptures to be used as a framework for understanding the concept of Bhava in Theravada Buddhism 2) to study the concept of Bhava in its various forms as shown in the secondary scriptures consistent with the teachings of the non-self in Buddhism 3) to analyze the concept of Bhava that can be applied to the individual life and the modern societies.

From the first objective of the research, it is found that the concept of Bhava is evident in the Tipitaka scriptures. This point shows that the physical action, the speech and the mental action of beings lead them to the birth in 3 states of the beings which are divided into 31 states by their karma. The karma and the circle of the birth and the death in 31 states are in the process of the cause and effect without the connection with the self or the immortal soul.

From the second objective of the research, it is found that the Buddhist teaching of Bhava developed in the secondary scriptures by the later disciple shows that the teaching of Bhava can be interpreted into 2 ways:- the type of the present life and the life of the death (the incarnation) and 2) the type of the present life. The first type of the interpretation is associated with the cause and effect leading beings to fall into the stream of the birth and the death in the states of the humans beings

and in other forms of lives according to the cosmological structure of Bhavas. This type of the interpretation is viewed as contrast to the teaching of Anatta. The second type of the interpretation is associated with the current events in every stage of life leading human beings' lives to facing with every kind of the sufferings. This type of the interpretation can be applied to the present life.

From the third objective of the research, it found the Buddhist teaching of Bhava which emphasizing the importance of the present life can be applied to the quality of the individual life and the present societies.